

Student Officer: Opportune Simon

Commission: Environmental Committee

Position: Deputy Chair

Issue: Ending all trade in ivory

Introduction

In today's globalized world, the key to economic prosperity is primarily through trades. Trade is the invisible hand that leads individual country to a more globalized society and economic welfare. Consequently, countries that have delved into active trading are currently wealthier than those that have not. There exist many methods of trading. Unfortunately, some methods have deeper consequences than others. As the world's demand of ivory trading heightened, the ivory tusk animals population in the world declined heavily. The international community voted for total ivory ban in 1990. Nevertheless, some parties in relatively unstable countries continue to poach, selling ivory on the black market to the highest bidder: in Asia, a rhino horn has about the same street value as that of cocaine in the US. These growing threats have significantly affected numbers of tusk animals. Unfortunately, many of the targeted nations are currently incapable of effectively managing the problem. Hence, it is up to the Environment delegates to come up with tangible solutions to the rising threats, ensure that the total ban on ivory is respected, thus ending the poaching of wild elephants and other mammals.

Definition of Key Terms

Trade - Export, re-export, import and introduction from the sea

Ivory - A hard, smooth, white substance variety of dentine that forms the tusks (or teeth) of the elephant, the hippopotamus, the walrus, the narwhal and the mammoth.

Range states - A range state refers to any nation that exercises jurisdiction over any part of a range that a particular species inhabits. The term also includes any nation with vessels flying their flag that engage in exploitation (hunting, fishing or capturing) of that species.

Environmental crime - An environmental crime is an illegal act that directly harms the environment. International bodies have recognized illegal wildlife trading and poaching as environmental crimes.

Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna

(CITES) - CITES is viewed by many as the world's most important Multilateral Environmental Agreement. It is an international agreement between governments, which provide varying levels of protection for species that are or may be in danger of extinction from international trade. 176 countries are members of CITES.

International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) - With offices in 16 countries, IFAW is one of the largest animal welfare and conservation charities in the world. Their mission is to: reduce commercial exploitation of wild animals, protect wild life habitats, and providing emergency relief to animals in distress.

History

Last century

Elephant populations declined massively due to the legal ivory trade, together with habitat destruction and increased agricultural production. Shooting an elephant on a safari was the height of sophistication and power for wealthy westerners. The mass production of objects produced from ivory (such as combs, brush handles, piano keys and pool balls) conveyed the international frenzy over the product. Uncontrolled ivory poaching cut Africa's elephant population from 26 million (in 1800) to 10 million (in 1900). Two hundred tons of ivory per year were consumed in the 1910s by the United States. As westerners realize the consequences of the trade with only 1.3 million elephants left in Africa, Asian demand picked up and the poaching continued.

The year 1989

By 1989, the TED (Trade and Environment Database) showed that only 600,000 African elephant were left in the wild. Richard Leakey, who was named Director of Kenya's wildlife service, felt that they should do "something really dramatic", and convinced Kenya's president to publicly burn the countries' stockpile of accumulated ivory. This act brought elephants (and CITES) worldwide attention, and within a year the trade in ivory was banned worldwide and demand declined.

Key Issues

The 1999 and 2008 crisis

Since the total ban of ivory trade in 1990, there have been sustained attempts by certain countries to overturn the ban. In 1999, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe were allowed an 'experimental one-off sale' of over 40 tones of ivory to Japan. The ivory sold had to be only harvested from elephants that had died of natural causes or killed to control population; and all

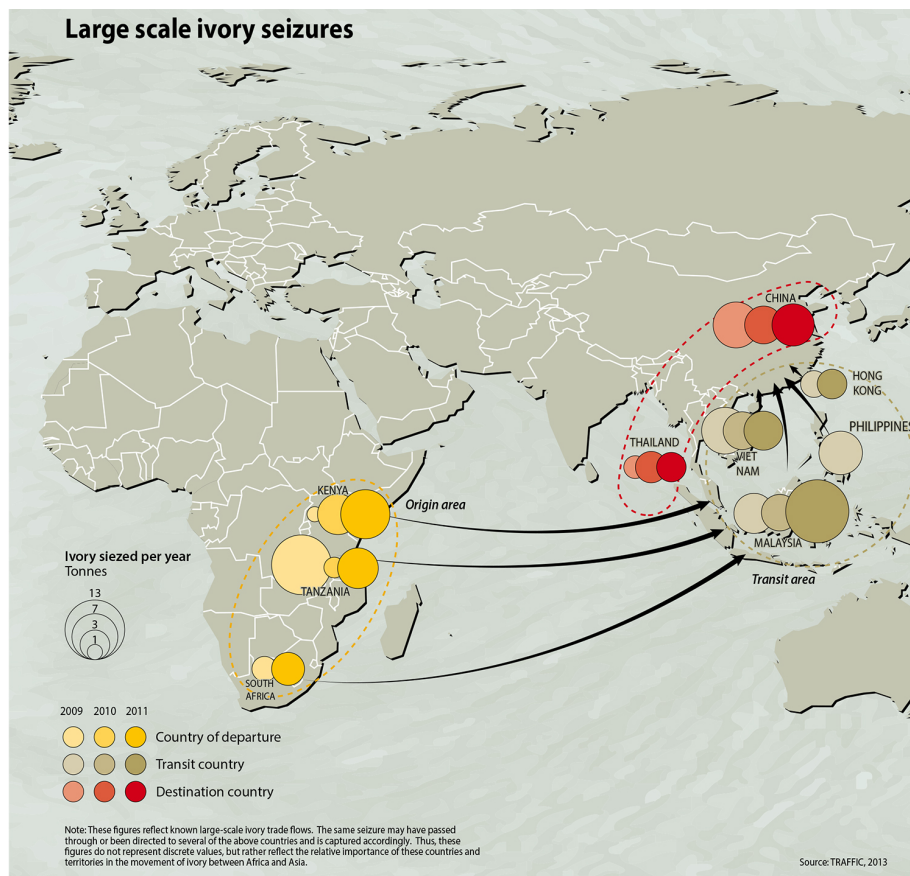
proceeds from the deal went towards elephant conservation. A second one-off sale took place in 2008, with 105,000 kg of ivory being shipped to China and Japan.

The modern poaching crisis

The sale of elephant tusks was banned back in 1990. But elephant welfare groups say around 30,000 elephants a year are still being killed to meet the demand for trinkets and carvings that are often sold to tourists in countries such as Thailand.

The Internet has also given a huge boost to the ivory business: last year, the IFAW found over 17,000 ivory products on sale on Chinese websites. Another investigation in March 2013, made by the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), accused Google to promote the sale of ivory, especially in Japan, by advertising ivory products. *The New York Times* reported on a large upsurge in ivory poaching, with about 70% flowing to China.

The rules on ivory trade can't operate if the consumers aren't aware of the danger it is for wildlife's conservation. For instance, rhino horns are crushed and consumed by people in Asia who believe it can cure diseases including cancer, fever or even hangovers.



An alarming map of the ivory trade in 2009, 2010 and 2011.

More information on the article of *The Washington Post*, 15th of March 2013.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Central Africa

The situation in Congo between 1890 and 1910 is described as “the vilest scramble for loot that ever disfigured the history of human conscience” by Joseph Conrad. The nation signed the “Accra Declaration” calling for a total ivory trade ban. Kenya has been one of the biggest supporters of the ban. It lost 5% of its elephants to poaching in the 1970s and 1980s. However, representatives for Central African countries were informed that illegal ivory trade may currently constitute an important source of funding for armed groups, including the LRA (Lord’s Resistance Army); and that poachers were armed with sophisticated weaponry, some of which might be originating from the fallout in Libya. The vicious cycle of events encouraged some countries such as Cameroon, to use the national army to hunt down poachers. Efficiently eliminating poaching in southern Africa through efficient game park management and the development of game tourism, would give local peoples an incentive to protect wildlife as a long-term economic resource.

Southern African countries

South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and Swaziland actively work to reverse the ban on ivory trade. They claim to have well managed elephant populations and that they need the revenue from ivory sales to fund conservation. Zimbabwe, Namibia and Botswana, also known as the ZNB group, argue their herds of African elephants are now so large they are damaging the environment.

China

China is the world’s largest illegal ivory market (according to the World Wide Fund for Nature), and shows no sign of banning the ivory trade. It is known that the Chinese government conspired with the Japanese government to control ivory prices during the 2008 ivory auctions in Africa. However, the Chinese government promised in May 2013 “to pay great attention to the protection of elephants” and “to supply themselves only through international auctions”. Chinese actress Li Bingbing is playing a crucial role in preventing the illegal poaching by saying no to ivory products. She visited Kenya, showing her engagement in her role as Goodwill Ambassador for the UNEP (UN Environment Programme).

Japan

Japanese use ivory for traditional instruments and signature seals. In the 1950s, cheaper Japanese ivory became more competitive than American ivory manufacturing. In the 1980s, Japan was the biggest purchaser of ivory in the world. In that Japan is the first country legally to import ivory under a relaxation of the international trade ban in 1999. IFAW was fully against the decision on designating Japan as a trading partner for this one-off sale, due to the inadequacies of Japan’s ivory trade controls.

Thailand

Thailand is one of the countries that could be badly hurt by sanctions from CITES. It conducts a profitable legal trade in several wildlife items. Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra declared

the country was committed to stamping out the trade in June 2013; this was the first time the Thai government has said this publicly. Thailand's deputy director-general of Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Land Conservation insisted on the fact that Thailand was only a transit country, and that more effort was needed at the origin and end countries "the basic rule of supply and demand".

Vietnam

A report by the WWF International found that Vietnam was the major destination for rhino horns trafficked from South Africa, where 448 rhinoceroses were poached last year.

Russia

Moscow is a major hub for the trade in walrus ivory. In the northern part of the country (Siberia), ivory hunters are known to search for mammoth tusks. More than 60 tons of ivory are exported each year, mainly to Hong Kong. The trade in mammoth ivory is not illegal, but IFAW's UK director clearly stated that "anything that looks like ivory only promotes the illegal trade", and calls for a halt in those actions.

Greenland & Canada

Greenland could trade walrus and narwhal ivory until the fourteenth century (when the Greenland colonies collapsed). Greenland joined the Norwegian kingdom in 1261, losing its ability to trade independently. The ivory business fell to specialized trading monopolies located in Norway. In the early 18th century, Denmark asserted its sovereignty over the island. Gradually, Greenland was opened up to Danish merchants, and closed to those from other countries. They stopped exporting ivory, using the products only for cultural purposes. After the 1999 ban, the Canadian federal government imposed an international export ban of narwhal tusks, realizing the danger of ivory trade and standing firmly opposed to it.

Timeline of Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

1970s-1980s: Ivory trade reaches peak levels.

1990: Total ivory ban, all African elephants transferred to Appendix I.

1999: Countries opposed to the ban attempt to organize a sale of stockpiled ivory to Japan.

2002: The ZNB group received permission to sell 60 tons of ivory stockpiles.

2006: "Accra Declaration" signed by 19 African countries

13-25 March 2010: Fifteenth meeting Conference of the Parties in Doha (Qatar)

3-14 March 2013: Sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Bangkok (Thailand)

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

Delegates overseeing a 175-nation endangered species treaty adopted measures intended to curb smuggling of elephant ivory and rhino horn, including a new plan to eventually allow ivory to be legally traded again in global markets. The treaty allows CITES member states to recommend that parties stop trading with non-compliant countries in the 35,000 species covered under the convention, including ivory. In June 2013, a meeting of the CITES put three African and five Asian nations on notice that their efforts to protect elephants from poachers were inadequate. Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and China were warned that if suitable actions weren't taken, they would be prohibited from trading wildlife products.

Monthly reports released by the UNEP. The report released in March 2013 shows that ivory trade tripled in the last decade, even with all the attempts to resolve the issue, for criminal networks are increasingly involved and entrenched in the trafficking between Africa and Asia. It calls for enhanced law enforcement. The report recommends collaboration among transit and consumer countries through international organisations such as CITES, the UNODC (UN Office for Drugs and Crime), Interpol and the World Bank. The IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) supports the UNEP in the report and shares the same opinion towards illegal ivory trade.

UNEP recently signed an agreement with Shanghai to display a series of photographs in the underground rail network highlighting illegal wildlife trade. These images will draw attention to the black market in elephant ivory, rhino horn and more.

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Numerous NGOs such as MIKE (Monitoring Illegal Killing of Elephants) and Born Free, have created data gathering teams or anti-poaching teams in countries incapable of effectively managing the problem. But even in protected areas, such as Parc W, a transboundary vital habitat for elephants (in Burkina Faso, Benin and Niger), poachers continue to attack the mammals with rising demand for ivory in Eastern Asia. The teams are unequipped to defend the elephants, and sometimes themselves, against the poachers. This solution is not thus feasible.

Within the margins of the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, the ICCWC (International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime) organized a roundtable on transnational organized wildlife and forest crime for high level representatives, where concrete and time-bound measures were discussed and incorporated in a suite of decisions to combat wildlife crime (to be implemented between 2013 and 2016).

The CITES Secretary-General, John Scanlon, asks that “adequate human and financial resources, the sharing of know-how, raising public awareness and strong law enforcement” should be in place to put a brake to the rise in poaching and illegal trade.

Possible Solutions

Solution to the problem of poaching and illegal trade focused on trying to control ivory movements through CITES. Delegates need to continue focusing this way while expanding their ideas to find tangible solutions. Enforcing the law in member states could be a possibility: all traffickers should be arrested. Direct actions targeting all those involved in ivory trafficking are one of the most important ways to dismantle the illegal ivory trade. Projects could be made for educating the consumers: a survey in China found that almost 70% of the public thought ivory did not come from dead elephants but that it fell out naturally. Another idea is to close down national markets in ivory, in order to show the importance of a total trade ban. In a recent poll conducted to supplement the National Geographic film *Battle of the Elephants*, 84 percent of Chinese middle class respondents said the number one reason they might stop buying ivory is if their government told them to stop. However, as Dr Brendan Moyle pointed out on March 1st this year, “This is a problem that requires an economic solution rather than a kneejerk reaction, such as a total ban”. It is up to the Environment delegates to find those solutions.



Work Cited

“Ivory trade basics”

http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/media/history-ivory-trade/?ar_a=1

http://www.unep.org/pdf/RRAivory_draft7.pdf

“Organisations created”

<http://www.cites.org/>

<http://www.bloodyivory.org/>

<http://www.ifaw.org/>

<http://www.traffic.org/>

<http://www.bornfree.org.uk/campaigns/elephants/>

“Recent events”

<http://www.bornfree.org.uk/animals/african-elephants/projects/ivory-trade/>

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/363435/Mammoth-ivory-treasure-haul>

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/21/us-china-ivory-idUSBRE94K0CL20130521>

<http://newswatch.nationalgeographic.com/2013/05/30/china-ivory-prosecution-a-success-exposes-fundamental-failure/>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/396123.stm>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/05/google-ivory-ads_n_2810863.html

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-21673422>

<http://news.msn.com/world/countries-involved-in-black-market-ivory-trade-may-face-sanctions?stay=1>

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=44295&Cr=poach#.UjbaNxaBLfY>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2177801/UN-urged-resume-worldwide-ivory-trade-bid-cut-illegal-poaching-Africa.html>

http://www.cites.org/eng/news/pr/2013/20130523_un_lra.php

<http://www.unep.org/newscentre/default.aspx?DocumentID=2716&ArticleID=9490>

<http://wwf.panda.org/?208042/Better-protection-for-elephants-rhinos-and-more-from-UN-treaty>

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2013/03/15/an-alarming-map-of-the-global-ivory-trade-that-killed-17000-elephants-in-one-year/>